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recognized to open on LB 898.

SPEAKER KRISTENSEN: Thank you, Mr. President and members of the Legislature. LB 898 is a priority bill that I assumed and thought I would never, ever introduce in my life. I didn't run for the Legislature to do that. I never campaigned to do that. But, you know, what I did sign up to do was to do the state's business. And that doesn't mean building my legislative resume with popular things. That doesn't mean going out and telling people what they want to hear. The real work entails on what needs to be done and how do we do that. And I would tell you that LB 898 is not the bill that I would be proud of if I was out on the campaign trail. But I am very proud of that fact when I am hopefully done with this session and we look back to the things we needed to do. And the reason for that is, last fall, when we had a Special Session, by the way, last fall wasn't a particularly hard Special Session. None of us like to come back, but as you remember in the Special Session, there were some principles that were laid out and one of them was, we're not going to cut money from aid to individuals and we're not going to take money from TEEOSA, from state aid to schools. We did not. If you look at what we did during the Special Session, you will see the line that talks about aid to education, the TEEOSA aid that we've established, there's a goose egg there. We took nothing from that. We left Special Session with the hope that things would get better. They did not. And so as we began this session it became painfully clear that we were going to have to do a number of things that you've already heard outlined, and many of you have staked out positions and I think done a very good job of exhibiting the painful choices you have to make. Each one of us would have a different plan. Each one of us would put different parts into it. But one of the things that you can't ignore is that everyone needs to contribute to this problem, and all areas need to try to contribute to it. One-quarter of the state budget rests in state aid to schools. So far that one-quarter hasn't contributed to the problem. We would like to hold that one-quarter free if we could. But the issue is that I don't think we can. And so as we began this year, we had to look for cuts; we looked to the Appropriations Committee. They have been through a very difficult process. They worked very hard; they